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## HOUSTON CHRONICLE ARCHIVES

**Paper:** HOUSTON CHRONICLE**Date:** THU 11/25/2004**Section:** ThisWeek**Page:** 1**Edition:** 2 STAR**Train noise plan faces slowdown / Federal officials delay time when cities can act until April 2005**

By HEATHER SAUCIER, Houston Chronicle Correspondent

Residents in West University Place and Bellaire must wait longer for quiet zones than expected.

The Federal Railroad Administration will postpone the date that allows communities to establish quiet zones from Dec. 18, to April 1, 2005, announced Ron Wicker, director of the Public Works Department for West University, at a Nov. 22 City Council meeting.

An Interim Final Rule on the use of locomotive horns at highway-rail crossings was issued late last year, requiring trains to sound their horns at public highway-rail crossings. However, the train horn can be silenced within a quiet zone, established by appropriate improvements for each intersection.

"Because the Interim Final Rule generated significant interest from communities across the country, the FRA extended the public comment period by two months.

"The FRA had planned to issue the Final Rule last month, but the analysis and consideration required of each comment made meeting that schedule difficult."

The Final Rule will now be issued in January.

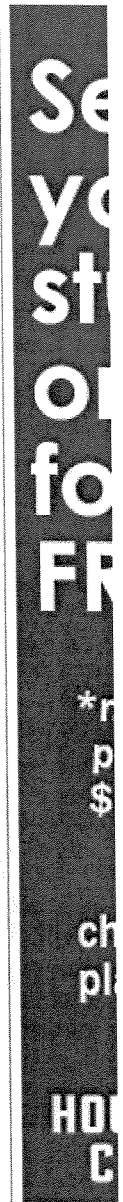
Until April 1, the sounding of horns will remain subject to state and local laws.

Wicker said the delay will allow the city of Houston, which has taken the lead on a pilot program to implement quiet zones from San Felipe Street to Willowbend Boulevard, more time to plan.

The establishment of quiet zones is unrelated to West University's proposed amendment designate quiet hours.

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